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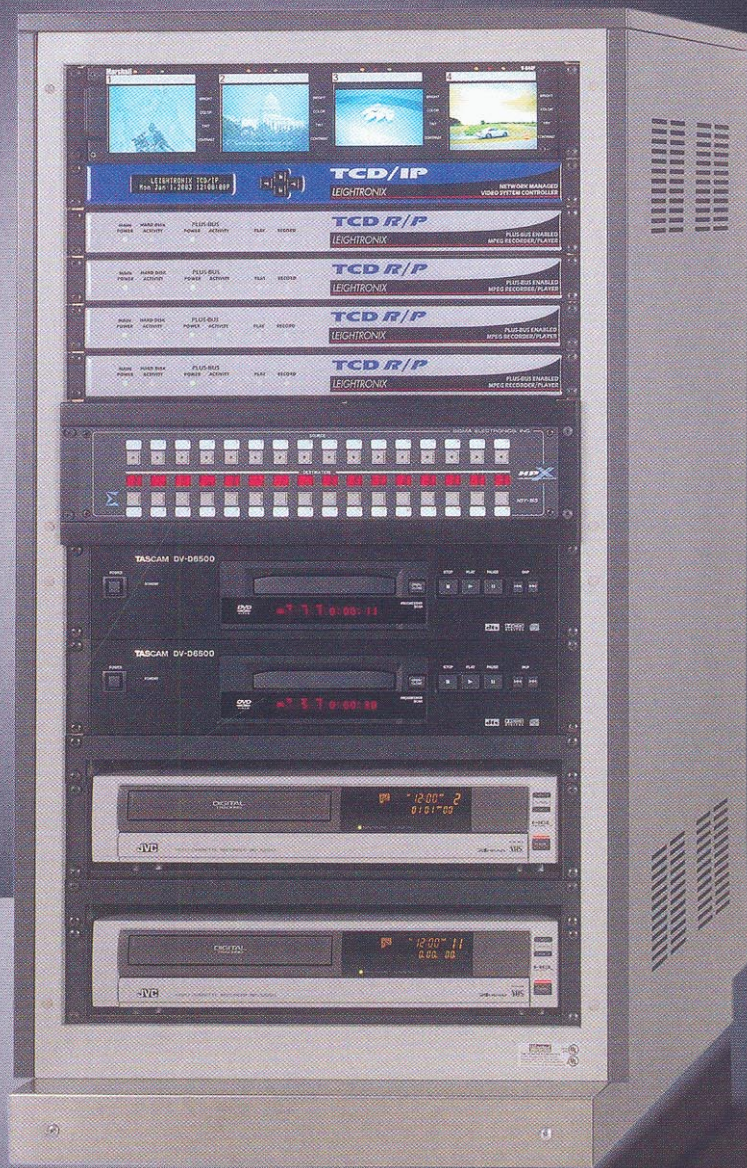
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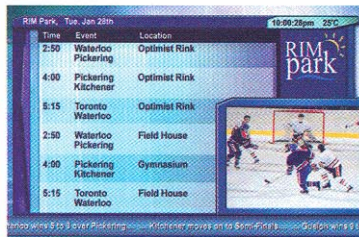
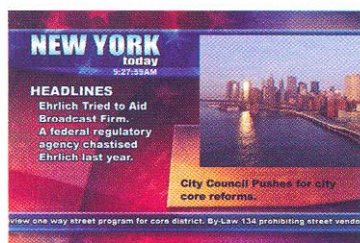
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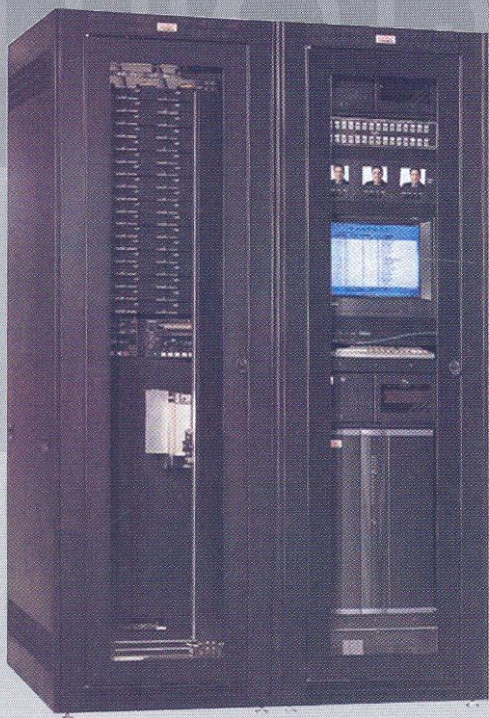


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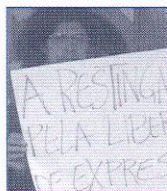


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As the journal of the Alliance for Community Media, COMMUNITY MEDIA REVIEW shall support the Alliance mission by providing: a comprehensive overview of past, present and future issues critical to the Alliance and its membership; vigorous and thoughtful debate on those issues; and a venue for members and like-minded groups to present issues critical to the Alliance.



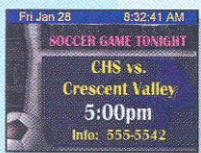
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## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# Media More Than Just Entertainment

BY BONNIE RIEDEL

On May 12, the Alliance for Community Media hosted a forum on media consolidation and the impending Federal Communications Commission Report and Order on media ownership and cross-ownership (which was voted 3-2 in favor by the commissioners on June 2). The forum was taped at Arlington Community Television under the direction of national board member Jackie Steven. On May 28, the forum went out on Free Speech TV six times for downlink by access centers across the country. And on May 29, the phones in the national office rang off the hook with people wanting information on what they could do to turn the situation around.

The show was moderated by Larry Irving (former head of National Telecommunications Infrastructure Agency under President Bill Clinton), and the guests included FCC Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein, Jeff Chester (Center for Digital Democracy) and me. I believe the show is an excellent discussion about the collapse of the diversity of voices in this country.

A week after taping the show, I was in Barranquilla, Colombia for an international conference on social uses of media, NUESTROSMedia III. It was an exciting trip and I had the honor of meeting media activists, academics and practitioners from all over the world. I presented information on how we have obtained Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) access and the issues we face in protecting this valuable public interest media. The text of my speech is on our website at [www.alliancecm.org](http://www.alliancecm.org) in the News section. To find out more about the conference go to [www.ourmedianet.org](http://www.ourmedianet.org).

During the conference I heard about: efforts to bring even the most rudimentary communications (telephone) to villages in Africa; a weekly television soap opera in Nicaragua (*Sexto Sentido* or

*You are part of an international effort of people who understand that media may often be best when it seeks to do more than just entertain. There is much that our friends around the world can learn from our experiences and it is clear to me, there is much that our friends around the world can teach us.*

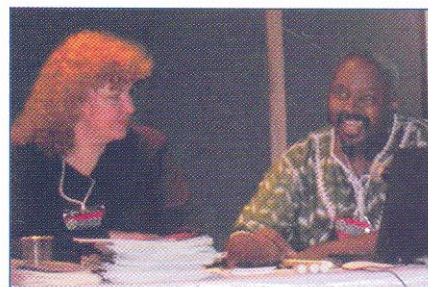
Sixth Sense) that features six teenagers as they tackle tough issues such as rape, domestic violence, sexual orientation, drug and alcohol abuse, reproductive health; the over 450 community radio stations in Colombia; regulatory efforts in Ecuador; using media for political organizing in Argentina; ethno-demographic mapping of media usage through a project at Oxford University, England; the delivery of wireless technology to the extreme rural areas of Canada; the independent media movement based in Seattle and its growth worldwide.

I had many opportunities to spend time with the communications students at the Universidad del Norte, our host campus, and I greatly enjoyed talking to them about their hopes and aspirations for the future. As one might expect, they have similar desires for their future as



Communications students of Universidad del Norte.

students do everywhere, but living in Colombia, they know that there is much work to be done to achieve their dreams. Frankly, my time with the students was my favorite time spent! I invited every one of them to visit our Washington office when they are in D.C. (Many of the students come from wealthy families and



Bonnie Riedel with Lumko Mpinde, telecom regulator, of South Africa.

they frequently come to the United States to visit).

On my arrival back in the U.S., the news was full of the impending FCC ruling on media consolidation and cross-ownership. I found it an odd juxtaposition, to have spent a week with people who are working so hard to get any kind of media into their hands and then to be here where we are so "media rich" and yet so few entities control it all.

Many times over the last few years I have briefed State Department visitors from various countries on our legislative and regulatory framework. Attending the conference in Colombia reminded me again how media democracy is a worldwide movement, a movement that is vital, growing and unstoppable. You are part of an international effort of people who understand that media may often be best when it seeks to do more than just entertain. There is much that our friends around the world can learn from our experiences and it is clear to me, there is much that our friends around the world can teach us.

Bonnie Riedel is executive director of the Alliance for Community Media. Contact her at [briedel@alliancecm.org](mailto:briedel@alliancecm.org)



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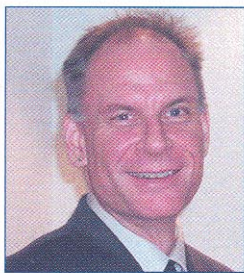
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## FROM THE ALLIANCE CHAIR

# Bom tarde, como vai? Tudo bem, voce a?

BY BRIAN WILSON

*Bom tarde, como vai? Tudo bem, voce a? Tudo bem, obrigado.*

Over the last few years I have had the privilege of visiting Brazil. Not wanting to seem the "Ugly American," I thought I should learn to speak Portuguese, specifically Brazilian Portuguese. Eu sou estudante de portuguese.

I grew up in a very normal happy family, with parents whose lives necessitated much international travel. My father was adamant about two things. We should embrace local culture and experience local peoples and we should never be perceived as the "Ugly American." Make all the jokes you want about French waiters, but Americans are often viewed as culturally narrow minded, believing that the American style of living is the only way of life, which only fosters the "French waiter" attitude. And I have witnessed Americans abroad displaying embarrassing and insulting behavior, refusing to learn local customs, expecting special treatment for simply being Americans, and making suggestions that a local resident's life as their housekeeper in the U.S. would far surpass their current standard of living. I can't begin express my shame while witnessing such actions. But because of my father's perspective, our family walked for miles through every foreign city we were in, in an effort to learn and embrace it. And by the time I was 13, although never fluent, I could negotiate my way around in French, German and a little Farsi. And now as an adult, I visit countries with the expectation of having to fit into their culture and not asking them to accommodate mine. Does that change their perspective of us as a people? I'm not sure. But I am sure that I walk away much more involved, engaged and enriched.

I don't think anyone in those countries was ever convinced I spoke their native tongue well, but I know they appreciated the effort to recognize the value of their language rather than to expect they would understand mine. In Brazil last year, I would stop the shop owners from speaking in English to me, insisting on them letting

*Recalling a speech heard long ago in our conferences about the many and varied types of corn being methodically narrowed down to one, our job is to guarantee that diversity remains available to the individual palate, and the everyone is invited to the tasting.*

me struggle through Portuguese because I wanted to understand it. More importantly for me, I wanted to deliver a message that said I saw value in their culture and wanted to cross a communication barrier. I got to the point where I could tell if someone was a *carioca* from Rio or a resident of Sao Paulo. But believe me, no matter how I tried; they knew I was a tourist. However, we were able to communicate, laugh together, share the experience and walk away knowing that I carried with me a lit bit more of them than the other way around.

However, I believe there is a more important lesson underneath my travel tales. The struggle to communicate, share needs and points of view, and be understood, is universal and the responsibility create the opportunity for it is incumbent upon all of us. For our part, as a movement and an organization, we must reach out and embrace our fellows around the globe who share similar goals. And we must take the necessary steps to understand the message in the "native" tongue and then pass that valuable gift on. Recalling a speech heard long ago in our conferences about the many and varied types of corn being methodically narrowed down to one, our job is to guarantee that diversity remains available to the individual palate, and the everyone is invited to the tasting.

I discovered I am much better at reading in Portuguese than I am in listening to it. So, when in Brazil, I turned on the closed captioning to better understand the programming. And there amidst the many hours of novellas and soccer games, I found local programming discussing the plight of the residents of the favelas (squatters slums) in Rio. I witnessed Brazilian democracy in action as the country elected a new and popular socialist

President; Lula. And recently I have seen similar documentaries about the favelas appearing on access television and in film festivals here in the US. But as you will learn in this issue, not all change in the government in Brazil is seen as positive. The fledgling Brazilian community television movement seems to be at a standstill and the growing community radio community may be systematically being shut down. Sound familiar?

This issue of the CMR is entitled "The Wired World" and reflects a world of cultures from Asia to Poland to Colombia and all from the perspective of local voices, sharing the message and developing a worldwide movement. And I believe, as we share our messages, our cultures and our experience in developing community media in this country, we support this important movement in this wired world.

For nearly two years now I have been negotiating an opportunity to explore community media in Cuba. And last week I was invited to participate in an international media congress in Mexico. My hope is that these adventures come to fruition. So as I look forward to these trips, the Alliance continues to share its mission with the world. It is through this international community building bridges, sharing cultural experiences from our fellows around the world, that we can strengthen both our cause, but more importantly our mutual understanding while dispelling the image of the "Ugly American."

I am eager to read this issue. I am sure we will all find it quite compelling.

*Brian Wilson is chair of the Alliance for Community Media and a former PEG ED and currently a public policy, planning and compliance analyst for the City and County of San Francisco. Contact him at [Brian.Wilson@sfgov.org](mailto:Brian.Wilson@sfgov.org).*



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Way back in 1969, writing about the then kooky ideas of Marshall McLuhan, author Tom Wolfe asked the question “What if He is Right?”<sup>1</sup> Well, it turns out the “kook” was actually a media visionary and some of his wackier thoughts have become mundane reality. McLuhan coined the concepts of a wired world and global village. Where most people saw only data and information, McLuhan sensed that mass media was becoming what he termed a “second skin” which was fundamentally altering the way people saw themselves and others.

The wired (and wireless) connections that tie tribes of people together via the Internet, television and radio are what this issue of *CMR* highlights. The promising power of media to advance human understanding and bring disparate groups into harmony with one another is what McLuhan hoped the global village would someday become.

In this issue: award-winning access TV producer **Mary Lou Bigelow** travels back to Afghanistan to tell the real story of a historic civilization and generous people nearly destroyed by war; **Erik Möllberg** travels from the Hoosier state to a former Communist state to recount the evolution of television in post-revolution Poland; **Eli Kao** writes about Cambridge Community TV’s International Channel and its vital connection to new immigrants to the United States; **Melody Tsang** recounts the history of the access show *Asian Spectrum* and how it keeps Chinese speaking Americans in touch with each other in greater Boston; From England, **David Wortley** writes on the subject of distance learning over community radio and the Internet; Houston Media Source’s **Jim Ellinger** reviews the latest World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) conference held in Nepal; **Julio Wainer** gives an up-to-the minute, on the ground report about the setbacks, protests and expectations on the community radio and TV movement in Brazil; From Open Channels Europe, **Christer Hederström** looks back at how and why he developed The Global Village CAT website; The president of Radio Free Europe, **Thomas Dine** comments on how the Internet is bringing down a dictator in Armenia; Using media as a tool for conflict resolution is the focus of an overview of the Search for Common Ground; The global reach and influence of the Independent Media Center is documented by **Mike Eisenmenger**; The unlikely creation of community TV in Bolivia is the subject of **Robert Huesca**’s report; **Clemencia Rodriguez** details the discussion around media justice and citizens’ media from Baranquilla, Colombia at the OUR Media III conference held in May of this year. The issue also looks at the World Summit on the Information Society, the first of which will be held this December in Geneva, Switzerland.

Thanks for the support of the *CMR* Editorial Board, particularly John Higgins, to the great George Stoney, and to Managing Editor Tim Goodwin for his guidance and tireless work to make it all happen. Thanks to my staff at Malden Access TV, especially Lee Ann Small, who made it possible for me to take on this task. Many thanks to Juan Nicolas Ruiz for designing the cover.

— Jeff Hansell

<sup>1</sup>*The Pumphouse Gang*, by Tom Wolfe

Jeff Hansell is executive director of Malden Access TV north of Boston; also the chair of the Northeast Region of the Alliance for Community Media; and, thanks to the generous and unselfish cooperation of his wife Sophie, the new father of twin boys, Jules and Mathis. Contact him at [jeff@matv.org](mailto:jeff@matv.org).

## WIRED WORLD ‘THE GLOBAL VILLAGE’



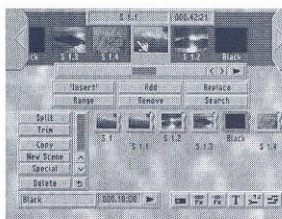
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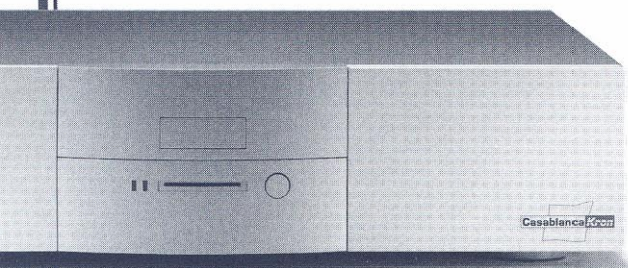
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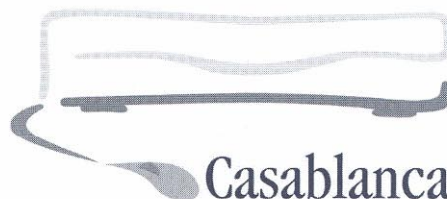
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# Afghanistan Revisited

***'I was incensed at the media's focus on men and boys with guns and women dressed in filthy chaderis or burqas, begging in the streets.'***

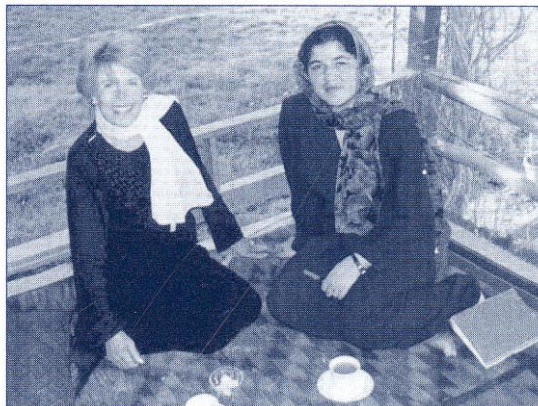
BY MARY LOU BIGELOW

What's wrong with your mobile, Mary Lou? I've been calling all day! Get over to Chuman Husori. Now!" came the staccato voice over the phone. It was Nasrullah Noori, media relations for the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "There's to be a bonfire of a narcotics haul over at the field," he said hurriedly in my ear. "You have about five minutes!"

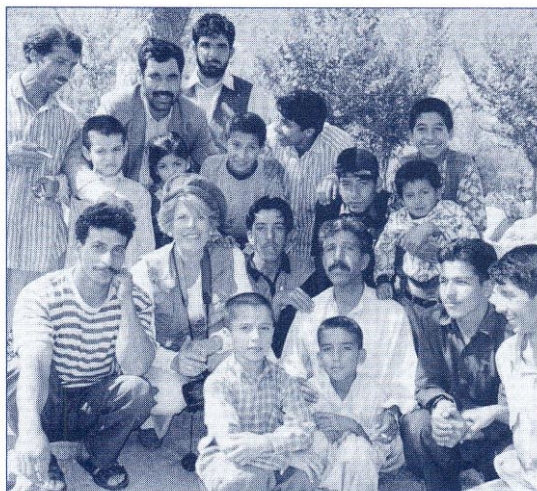
"Turn the car around, Dell," I called out. Zoot Zoot! Chuman Husori." A screech of wheels, a quick turn and we barreled down the pitted, dusty road, bumping all the way at faster than normal speed over the rough terrain. I felt myself slam against the car door, then bounce up and down on the seat, listening to my camera paraphernalia rattling in the trunk. The car came to a sudden stop. We grabbed our equipment and ran to the site where a man stood atop a huge mound of what looked like packages of dirt. I grabbed my Canon GL2 from my interpreter Latif Noori and began recording just as the man picked up a small packet of a black substance from the pile and offered it to someone standing on the sidelines. When his friend refused it, he stuffed it in his own pocket, before proceeding to pour kerosene all over the pile. He jumped off his perch and seconds later the Minister of Interior Affairs Taj Mohammad Wardak lit a piece of paper and flung it at the pile. Boom!

That scene is in *The Mary Lou Bigelow Show—Afghanistan Series* that airs each week in the Massachusetts communities in Arlington, Boston, Cambridge, Chelmsford, Lexington and Winchester. It also airs on Manhattan Neighborhood Network Channel 56 or 108 each Saturday at 1:30 p.m. It will soon air on Channel 30 at Fairfax County TV in Virginia.

Why do I have such a passion to do this series? That requires a complicated



Mary Lou (left) interviews Attorney Hangama Anwari, training coordinator for UN Habitat - Afghanistan.



Mary Lou (center) with a party picnicing in Paghman.



(Left to right) Khyoom, Mary Lou, Hussein and Rajab in 1970. This picture was used in the episode "Search for Khyoom and Rajab."



answer. Perhaps I like living on the edge. When I have a camera in my hand, I will do just about anything, as though the camera lens shields me from any perceived or real danger on the other side.

My connection with Afghanistan goes back to 1968, when I moved to Kabul to accompany my former husband, a training captain with Pan AmWorld Airways, working on a technical assistance program with Ariana Afghan Airlines. I taught English to Afghans at the United States Information Service through 1972. These were probably the most memorable years of my life. Through the ensuing years, I often wondered why they

were so important to me.

Then came September 11, 2001, bringing back the memories of that great land. But the images on mainstream TV and print media were not of the ancient country and proud people I remembered. They were not of Afghans with the wide smiles and the welcoming ways as I remembered.

I was incensed at the media's focus on men and boys with guns and women dressed in filthy chaderis or burqas, begging in the streets. Reporters mispronounced "Kabul" and "Kunduz." They lumped the Afghans in with other nationalities as if they were a stereotype or a




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generic people fitting some trumped-up mold. They missed the mark.

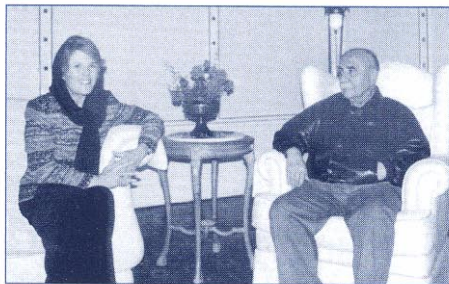
I had to do something—perhaps only to cleanse my soul for having left my former cook Khyoom and his brother Rajab to fend for themselves and not helping them throughout these devastating years of war, civil strife and Taliban oppression. The *Afghanistan Series* was born.

Prior to 9-11, *The Mary Lou Bigelow Show* focused on any issue or subject that struck my fancy. But in those September days, as the fire and smoke of the Twin Towers embedded itself into my psyche, I knew I had to tell the world that Al Qaeda was not a terrorist organization born of the Afghans. I had to tell people around the world that Afghans never stirred outside their country to wage war. They merely fought to keep their rights and independence in a land that they called home. They saw Alexander the Great and Ghengis Khan pass through and finally, on August 19, 1919, banished the British after three wars. (In fact, one of my recent interviews in the Royal Palace was with H.R.H. Gen. Sardar Abdul Wali, son-in-law of former King Mohammad Zahir Shah and son of the Victor of Kabul H.R.H Sardar Shah Wali.)

In September 2002, I joined Newton, Massachusetts architect Najim Azadzo and others on a trip back to Kabul to attend a conference on Kabul Reconstruction and Urban Vision and at the same time to search for my former cook Khyoom.

Being back in Kabul was like going home. I was overwhelmed by the devastation on the one hand and yet heartened on the other by the pulse and energy of the city. I was welcomed with the Afghans' legendary hospitality, and especially when I told people that I lived there during the "good old days," under the regime of King Zahir Shah.

Six weeks later I climbed back into a B727 Ariana Afghan Airlines plane and started my journey back to the states, armed with wonderful memories, 50 hours of digital footage and lots of hours



**Mary Lou (left) interviews H.R.H. Gen. Sardar Abdul Wali, son in law of His Majesty Mohammad Zahir Shah and son of the Victor of Kabul in the third war with the British—Sardar Shah Wali in the Royal Palace.**

ahead of me at the Final Cut Pro editing station at Winchester Community Access and Media and Arlington Studio producing my shows.

As for Khyoom, I was not able to see him as he was working in Saudi Arabia, but he is now back in Kabul. We keep in

touch through email and the kindness of a friend at UNICEF. I look forward to returning as soon as possible to see him. Meanwhile, I keep pumping out the videos and hoping that my message is heard.

My most ambitious work to date is a 60-minute documentary with footage from my trip to Kabul last fall. *Return to Afghanistan, The Forgotten Land*, soon to



be released, gives an all-round picture of the country as it is today. Viewers will see extremes from devastated areas to beautiful guesthouses; from the noisy, crowded money bazaar to the calm of the countryside with its beautiful vistas; from the hardship of an emergency hospital that operates without water or heat to plush restaurants such as Popo Lano with repasts to tempt the palette. This is an unprecedented journey into the heart and soul of Afghanistan—a journey guaranteed to stir the emotions.

Thirty-nine *Afghanistan Series* episodes later, there seems to be no let up. MIT Rotch Library recently acquired seven of my programs for its lending collection and other universities are beginning to make enquiries.

The episodes are listed on my website at [www.maryloubigelow.com](http://www.maryloubigelow.com) or email me at [MLBGlobo@aol.com](mailto:MLBGlobo@aol.com).

*The MARY LOU BIGELOW SHOW* received five Alliance for Community Media awards in 2002. It took top honors as a talk show at the 2002 Hometown Video Festival as well as two first- and two second-place awards at the Northeast Region Video Festival. In 2003, it received honorable mention at the Videographer Awards and a Bronze at the Telly awards. Prior to her TV shows, Mary Lou founded and edited a special supplement called "Economic Development for 'Banker & Tradesman,'" a Massachusetts' banking periodical.

## WIRED WORLD WEBSITES TO WATCH:

### MediaRights.org

<http://mediarights.org>

### The Global Action Project

<http://www.global-action.org>

### Indigenous Media Network

<http://www.indigenousmedia.org>

### Media Arts Leadership Institute

<http://www.namac.org/MemberH/mali.html>

### MIT Media Lab

<http://www.media.mit.edu>

### Institute for Media, Peace and Security

<http://www.mediapeace.org>

### Internews

<http://www.internews.org>

### Community Media South Asia

<http://www.cmsouthasia.net>

### Voices for All – Media for Social Change

<http://www.voicesforall.org>

### Dot Com Alliance

<http://www.dot-com-alliance.org/index.html>

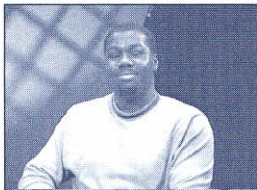
### Open Society Institute – Media Program

<http://www.osi.hu/nmp>

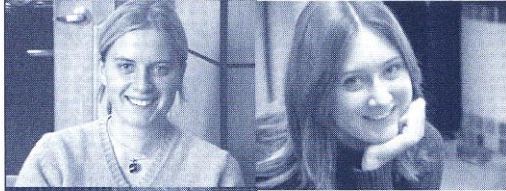
### Who Was Marshall McLuhan?

<http://www.digitalantern.net/mcluhan>





What do Grand Rapids, Seattle, Manhattan,  
Austin, and Denver have in common?



## the Youth Channel

Participants in the National Youth Media Access Project gather regularly to produce a programming block for their Access channels that represents the interests of young people. Tapes are shared between the five participating cities for an expanded understanding of national youth values.

For more information contact:  
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at the Alliance International Conference (BYOLunch) All welcome.



# Pre and Post Revolution Evolution of Broadcast Television in Poland

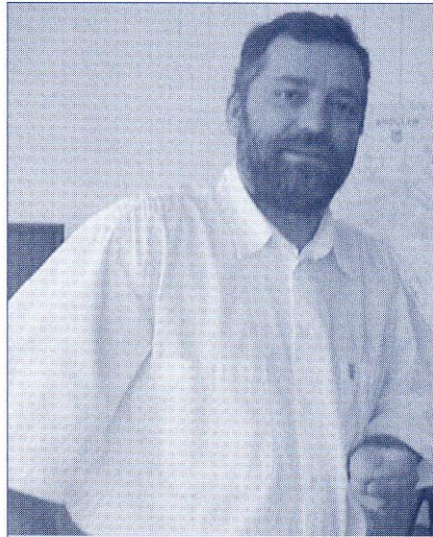
BY ERIK MÖLLBERG

**P**rior to the rise of the Solidarity Movement and the revolution of 1989, all Polish media was moderated, controlled and obligated to comply with the Leninists ("...in the socialist system the function of mass media is to stimulate activities in support of the system, to raise the new man, to serve the party, working people and to fight political opponents both within and without..."—Sawisz). So, while the television media remained under government control, radio had its moment in early April of 1982 when a station in Warsaw began broadcasting pro-Solidarity programming. The Polish government fought this move by imposing prison sentences, seizing transmitters, jamming signals, but radio broadcasters soon learned to broadcast their signal on the sound frequency of the state-run television, which included pictures with pro-Solidarity messages.

In the case of national television in Poland, the "owners" of the television station are in part the local government and the local community. The people of that region elect a board of directors with the chair of the board appointed by the highest-ranking mayor of that region. The chair of the board has no control over the programming decisions. The elected board members decide what programs will be produced, aired and what content will be allowed.

## The Old and New Regime

In Western Europe there is a tax paid by most citizens who own a television, which provides funding for the equipment and operations of state-run television. Yet, in Poland this type of tax is sometimes not paid (perhaps by 30 percent) or can be misread as another form of government control (and influence) over the broadcasting stations and their media messages. Ryszard Nowak, program director for TV Poland in Wrocław states, "Our funding comes from renting the space, such as the studio since other



*"The thought to keep in mind is even though the revolution is 10 years old, people are still fearful of any kind of censorship (which is a good thing) and yet some regulatory methods would be helpful. However, if the government were to suggest certain fiscal remedies, it could "smack" of the old governmental propaganda model that they lived with for so long."*

—Ryszard Nowak

independent producers and production companies don't have the equipment. We rent our lights, equipment and sometimes even our staff. We also sell our programs between the other public TV stations. It is sometimes hard since places like Warsaw Central produces its own varied programs and is not as interested in what we can provide. They also have more resources to draw on. Our programming is broadcast on cable television, but we receive no money from it, because Polish law demands that you send programming to cable TV for free."

I asked Ryszard Nowak what Polish TV is like now 10 years after the revolution? "Before we only had local programs on Channel 2 for about one hour and today we carry four or five hours on the channel. Other than that, there are the five hours from different countries we carry along with shared programming from the other Polish TV regional stations, like Krakow, Warsaw, also Germany, and the BBC. There are 12 regional channels in Poland, but only five hours of our 10 hours is Wrocław. There is the agreement between all regional national TV stations to play this shared programming from the other regions. The main content portion of our programming is informational. We also carry programs about social problems, economics and those

connected to the specific region. The informational programs usually deal with problems with ecology, family, social issues and education.

"The thought to keep in mind is even though the revolution is 10 years old, people are still fearful of any kind of censorship (which is a good thing) and yet some regulatory methods would be helpful. However, if the government were to suggest certain fiscal remedies, it could "smack" of the old governmental propaganda model that they lived with for so long. One example would be franchise fees from cable television, which could assist National TV's funding issues." When I explained to Mr. Nowak that this is how U.S. public access channels are funded, he smiled and said "That is the way it was done before the revolution. If it were to be suggested, the people wouldn't approve of it." Therefore, it appears that there is not a lot of room to maneuver for the current communication systems in place.

## Forms of Alternative Media

From all apparent research, the only major form of alternative media in Poland is in print. The only TV media that could be considered a "new" form would be the growth of small independent production houses and more importantly, commercial broadcast TV stations. There



is slowly an increase in small video production houses, which currently produce some local programming for both national and commercial TV. Through the sale of those programs, the independents can afford to produce "made for television" video movies (not film) that will allow for a greater expression of current Polish culture. Whether or not these programs will emulate western television is unclear. However, there are organizations within Poland such as Fundacji Komunikacji Spoecznej (Foundation for Social Communication) and the European Institute of Social Marketing (EIMS) whose mission is "to use the tools of modern marketing to empower civil initiatives for public good and to increase social awareness of the society."

#### Cultural survival

From most appearances, television is affecting the Polish people and their culture no more than their next-door neighbors in Western Europe. It would be negligent to say that because of more "programming content," and freedom for both public and private television channels, that Polish people are now able to expand and explore their cultural heritage without the constraints and censorship of communist state run television. Polish law enjoins public television to provide for public service programming on a variety of levels. Included within Article 21.2 of the Polish law is this statement:

The public-service broadcaster shall, through the totality of his programming, meet the most multifaceted needs possible of the widest possible group of listeners and viewers, including minorities living in his receiving area, particularly by: a) Presenting literary and artistic works as well as cultural, religious and philosophical values: Disseminating knowledge oriented towards education and training...

And so on. It is a mandate by the Polish government itself that these public broadcasters shall uphold the meritorious intentions that come close to the prescribed recommendations of public broadcasters in the US and most certainly the best of the BBC.

Even Radio Wroclaw, another form of public broadcasting, includes all of these elements. According to their mission, they carry "news from the world, the country and the region in hourly news



Independent filmmaker editing at an alternative film company.

*If the national (regional) television channels manage to sustain their government subsidy as a funding base, they will continue to survive and contribute local programming for their communities.*

broadcast, information and commentary on science, art, culture in cooperation with all the cultural scientific and artistic circles."

#### Conclusion

If the national (regional) television channels manage to sustain their government subsidy as a funding base, they will continue to survive and contribute local programming for their communities.

They will still have the "taint" and image of being under some governmental control and influence as perceived by the Polish community. This is a learned behavior and historical image created by the previous years of communist rule and it is doubtful that that image can be shaken no matter how much education is done. It is this author's opinion that the perceived threat to the national TV stations by the new commercial TV ventures is indeed relevant and something that should be monitored well. It could

very easily happen that the American programming provided by the commercial stations will continue to take viewers away from the national stations since the "image" portrayed of wealth and prosperity is not lost on the Polish people. In any developing country, the desire to escape economic disparity is natural.

The issue of foreign ownership of media outlets is another issue for the Polish government to carefully monitor. While current law restricts ownership to 33 percent, these same issues in terms of local ownership have been regulated by the Federal Communications Commission in the United States and relaxed time and time again as it is today. It is in these cases that the "power" of the media and its influence is felt. The Polish people at least, understand this. The government and the influence of American television on the Polish people (whom one can hope are more media literate because of their recent past) will decide whether this will continue.

*Erik Möllberg works for Access Fort Wayne (a public and government access facility) in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He was in Poland in July 2001 to present a paper on alternative media in the United States to a sociology and communications conference in Wroclaw, Poland. Contact him at 260.421.1248.*

*Email [emollberg@acpl.lib.in.us](mailto:emollberg@acpl.lib.in.us)*



# Channel 22 and Me

**'Two times a week? Only in America!'**

BY ELI KAO

Not long after I started my job as programming coordinator at Cambridge Community Television, a producer approached me to discuss beginning a regular series for the Ethiopian community on CCTV's Channel 22. (CCTV operates Channel 22 specifically as an outlet for non-English programming from the community.) So, I said "Sure, just fill out this form here and bring me your tapes. Each program gets two plays per week, and I'll let you know." Here I was cut off by the producer who, with an incredulous tone, responded, "Two times a week? For my program?" I assured him that this was indeed possible and, in fact, quite likely. He shook my hand vigorously, then looked upward and waved both arms in a reverent fashion as he left my office. "Two times a week? Only in America," he said, "Thank you!"

Despite current threats to the freedom and independence of mass media in the U.S. (the FCC's failure to act as an advocate for the public interest, for example), Americans still enjoy a level of media democracy far greater than much of the world. The reaction of the producer I mention seems almost clichéd, and at first I was not sure whether his gratitude was sincere. Now I talk with this producer each time he brings a new show, and I can now say without a doubt that he spoke entirely in earnest. The type of service we provide at CCTV is unheard of in Ethiopia, where media is tightly controlled by the state. Speaking with him was a lesson in valuing what public access TV is able to provide to our community, and not to take it for granted!

Regardless whether they are originally from a country with repressive media control, CCTV producers find Channel 22 to be a vital connection

with their linguistic community in Cambridge. Tune into Channel 22 and you might see a weekly world news program in Mandarin Chinese, a cooking segment in Spanish, Haitian folk dancing, or a roundtable discussion on issues for Portuguese speakers. The vibrant religious and spiritual life of our local houses of worship is also well represented in multiple languages. Taken as a whole, Channel 22 programming reflects the demographics of our city, where Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Creole are the most widely spoken non-English languages in a city that draws its strength from diversity.

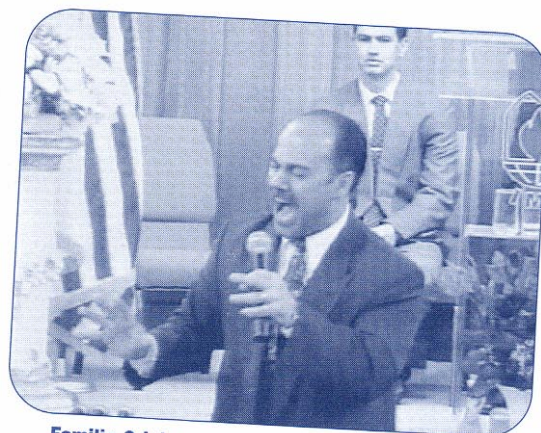
Though the goal is usually to connect and communicate with their own community, the hidden challenge for the producers and me is often interpersonal communication. Many times I have to make an additional effort when talking with producers of non-English programs. Any effort expended I find to be worthwhile because people really open up when they realize you are interested in understanding and helping them.

Interpersonal communication is a two-way street, and just as their programs enrich the cultural life of the community, the producers enrich my own knowledge and experience.

One of the most important realizations that I've had at CCTV came because of the man who thanked me so profusely for scheduling his show twice weekly. I can't imagine now how I thought he could have been less than sincere in his appreciation, and it is a reminder not to take for granted the importance of what we provide as public access TV stations.

*Eli Kao is programming coordinator at Cambridge Community TV, Cambridge, MA. Email: [eli@cctvcambridge.org](mailto:eli@cctvcambridge.org) CCTV's website is [www.cctvcambridge.org](http://www.cctvcambridge.org)*

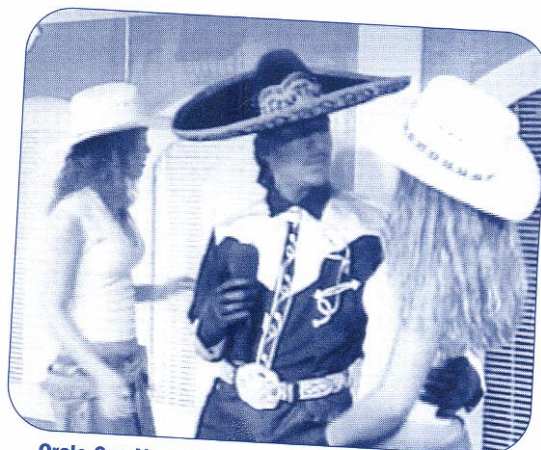
*Photos by Gayle Añonuevo*



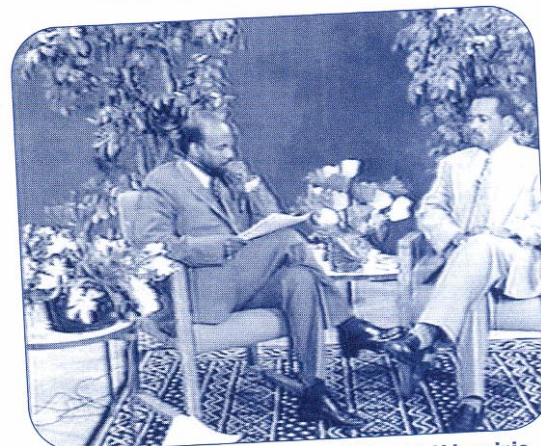
**Familia Crista**



**Focus TV**



**Orale Con Veronica**



**Voice of Abyssinia**





## A Bridge Between Cultures

# Asian Spectrum

BY MELODY TSANG

*A* *Asian Spectrum* was started in 1997 by a group of people who settled in Malden, Massachusetts after coming from different places, and who believed that through the use of mass media, such as TV, they would be able to convey the availability of services and essential news that might be of interest to newly immigrated Asians in the greater Boston area.

This group, who were all fortunate in possessing the necessary skills and knowledge to overcome the difficulties that face immigrants, took the opportunity to start *Asian Spectrum* to share their experiences and put them to a better use in aiding the local Asian-Pacific community.

According to the U.S. Census of 2000, between 1990 and 2000, the population of Asians in the greater Boston area grew by 68 percent. Most of these people are limited to certain trades to meet the demands of living. Communication barriers have restricted this group because of limited times and means to have any contact with the rest of the community.

The constant evolving nature of any culture would easily widen the gap between this new group of immigrants and the rest of America. *Asian Spectrum*

*The constant evolving nature of any culture would easily widen the gap between this new group of immigrants and the rest of America. ASIAN SPECTRUM would have to act as a bridge, assisting both cultures to create some capacity to incorporate each other into a lifestyle without compromises.*

would have to act as a bridge, assisting both cultures to create some capacity to incorporate each other into a lifestyle without compromises.

In the early years, *Asian Spectrum* cablecast from a single camera studio. Many mistakes were made and sometimes these errors found their way into the show, giving *Asian Spectrum* a human, sympathetic appeal. The program has video segments for special occasions such as doll making, for one.

Some crew members have come and gone, but many have stayed for a long time. These dedicated personnel have been with the show since it moved to a larger studio with more technical equip-

ment. The crew has become more technically savvy with the unreserved help of MATV staff and our fellow volunteers. Without this kind of critical support, the show never could have become such a widely watched and successful television show among the Asian community.

*Asian Spectrum* is now a multifaceted show with special video segments covering a broad range of topics. These field productions include roll-ins that talk about Chinese history, American born Asian youth with cultural assimilation challenges, the law, health care issues, interviews with elected officials and local celebrities.

Quoting from the following crew members, our amazing producer said, "The moment the show hits the air, all the agony of preparing and planning for it evaporates, there's a feeling of mission accomplished, knowing somewhere out there someone from the Asian community will benefit from the news, information, or entertainment." The crafty cameraperson said, "When I am behind the camera, I feel the life, the connection, and I can submerge into the context of the message being delivered from the hosts as well as the guests." The perfectionist director said, "To be involved is to be alive; the most joyful point in life is seeing your offspring making it, delivering the show is the closest to that same feeling." To be involved is a joy, and knowing that someone else benefits from what you do out there is most rewarding.

The public access television community is a unique environment much like a family. The objective is to be oneself. Any issues with the other members are irrelevant. Everyone does his job to accomplish a significant goal together. Everyone is a team player willing to give her own time and efforts to be on the crew of *Asian Spectrum*. We are very grateful to have MATV as our local community media center supporting our efforts and for the participation of our audience in Malden and greater Boston.

Melody Tsang is co-producer of *Asian Spectrum*. Email at [melodytg@yahoo.com](mailto:melodytg@yahoo.com)





# HFM Interactive

## Community Learning in the UK Via Radio and the Internet

BY DAVID WORTLEY

*HFM Interactive—THE Radio with Pictures Show* was a 3-week pilot project in the United Kingdom to assess the potential of community radio combined with virtual classroom technology as a tool for community engagement.

HFM (Harborough FM) is a community radio station operating under a Restricted Service License (RSL). The station can broadcast on a specific frequency for a period of one month. RSLs are granted up to a maximum of one every six months. HFM operated their ninth such License between May 19 and June 15, 2002.

The main content of the station is music. It is entirely managed and operated by volunteers who raise funds through sponsorship and advertising. HFM has been self-financing since its first broadcast. Its aim is to eventually secure a full time operating License once the legislation is relaxed to allow this. In order to secure a full time License, the strategy is to provide an innovative service which might be developed as a model for sustainability. HFM Interactive could provide that model.

### About HP Virtual Classroom

Hewlett Packard has a hosted virtual conferencing service called HPVC (HP Virtual Classroom). This provides an online environment which can be used for a variety of purposes including training and brainstorming. Because HPVC participants can enter this virtual space via a normal web browser, almost any PC compatible computer in the world can be used to join a virtual event.

Virtual events are hosted or facilitated by a project manager who trains the presenters and organizes the visual content shared by the participants. In order to ensure quality of service, the audio for any presentations and interaction is delivered using a separate teleconferencing bridge line. In other words, participants listen on the phone while they watch and interact via their PCs.

For many people who have only one

telephone line to use for internet access and phone calls, this is a barrier to participation, and the cost of telephone calls can be prohibitive, especially if they are international. Radio as a mechanism to deliver the audio content is an ideal low cost solution which includes everyone, whether or not they have a computer or telephone.

### HFM Interactive—THE Radio with Pictures Show

HFM Interactive combines the HFM Community Radio with HPVC to enable people in the Harborough District of the East Midlands to listen to a radio chat show with the option of logging on to the website to view the presentations and interact with the special guests and other members of the audience.

HFM Interactive developed a series of 15 one hour chat show programs on the theme of the Information Society. The program went out each weekday between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. UK time and involved telephone interviews with special guests around the world as well as local guests in the studio. It aimed to bring the local and global together in a common space to share ideas and interact with each other.

Over 50 special guests were involved from USA, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia, and the topics discussed under the general theme of the Information Society included such topics as health, knowledge management, social entrepreneurs, community media, gender, digital divide, sustainability, community publishing tools, and more.

At the end of each program, the content was archived and could be viewed both within the virtual classroom as a rolling screenshow and as a Powerpoint presentation via separate web page.

### The Lessons Learned

The technology worked well and, from anecdotal evidence, the program was well received by a local audience, despite the fact that only a handful of people logged on to the live broadcasts each day. There was a significant amount of access on the website with a daily hit rate in excess of

1000 per day. One of the visible benefits was the interaction between special guests who, although experts within a common field, all had diverse backgrounds and would have been unlikely to meet face to face under normal circumstances. HFM Interactive was successful at facilitating knowledge sharing and relationship building among these guests, who participated from different countries.

### The Next Step

HFM Interactive showed that any village or town anywhere in the world could now host its own international conference with top experts sharing experiences with a local audience.

Because large parts of the globe are under-served with internet access, but the majority of the globe has access to radio, this concept of developing programs which are both educational and entertaining and suitable for radio transmission, has potential for tackling the Digital Divide in a cost effective and practical way.

Funding is now being sought to develop this concept further as a global roadshow and research project aimed at building an inclusive Information Society where lifelong learning is accessible to everyone.

*This article originally appeared in  
COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY REVIEW.*

*David Wortley is owner and founder of Mass Mitec, a Leicestershire based new media consultancy specializing in virtual community/collaboration technologies. In 1997, David won a prestigious DTI award to fund the Harborough ComKnet (Community Commerce and Knowledge Network) project, exploring the use of information communications technologies for developing social and economic wealth within a physical community. Email [dwortley@massmitec.co.uk](mailto:dwortley@massmitec.co.uk)*



***“the right to communicate is in great jeopardy...”***

# AMARC8 Meets in Kathmandu, Nepal

BY JIM ELLINGER

Community media activists from nearly 60 countries gathered this past February in the smoggy Nepali capital of Kathmandu to take part in the AMARC8 Conference. More than 260 delegates representing over 2000 community broadcasters participated in the global forum of the community media movement.

AMARC, the French acronym for World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, is a 20-year-old Canadian-based NGO. AMARC Conferences are held every three years. AMARC8 was hosted by Radio Sagarmatha, the first community radio station in southeast Asia. The station is operated by the Nepali Forum of Environmental Journalists.

A large African delegation was in attendance in Kathmandu. At the time of the Dakar AMARC6 conference in 1997, there were only a handful of community radio stations on the entire African continent. Now there are hundreds of such stations in countries as far ranging as Sierra Leone, South Africa, Mozambique, Mali and Burkina Faso.

## AMARC Membership Meeting

At the membership meeting delegates passed the “Kathmandu Declaration,” which draws attention to “the threats posed by rampant militarism, accelerated privatization of the world’s basic resources, religious fundamentalism and extreme capitalism.” The Declaration rec-

*The Declaration endorses the African Charter on Broadcasting and “calls on all nations and governments to create and implement legislation that provides community access and ownership to the airwaves with particular attention to the rights of women, children, the disabled and other disadvantaged groups.”*



ognizes that “the right to communicate is in great jeopardy...” The Declaration endorses the African Charter on Broadcasting and “calls on all nations and governments to create and implement legislation that provides community access and ownership to the airwaves with particular attention to the rights of women, children, the disabled and other disadvantaged groups.”

Also at the membership meeting, the delegates elected their international board. Steve Buckley of the Community Radio Association of the UK was elected president and Lynne Muthoni Wanyeki of Kenya was elected deputy president.



Frieda Werden, Producer of WINGS, the Women’s International News Gathering Service, was elected vice president for North America. Werden replaced Elizabeth Robinson, general manager of KCSB-FM, Santa Barbara, who, after serving three terms as North American vice president, was elected treasurer.

## Conference Highlights

Among the highlights of the conference were the hugely popular “Bush Against War” T-shirts, handed out by Bush Radio, “Bush” referring to South African community radio, not the U.S. President. Proceeds from the sale of the shirts goes to support the community radio group’s work.

Alexis Martin is the Afghanistan country director for the Canadian NGO IMPACS (Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society). IMPACS is committed to “the protection and expansion of democracy and the strengthening of civil society.” The group works to create environments where democratic values can thrive. One way they do this is by provid-

## AMARC Born 20 Years Ago to Develop and Advocate for Community Radio

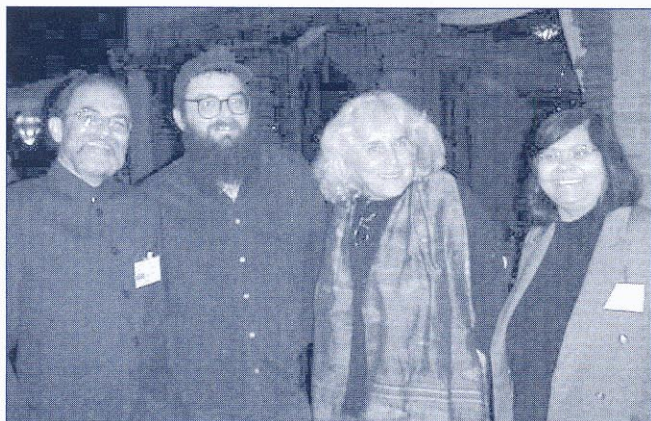
In the early 1980s, a white paper was published by the McBride Roundtable decrying the control of mass media by two oppositional voices: that of the US and its western allies vs. the Soviet Union and its allies. What of all of the other voices, the other perspectives, they asked. In response to that query, AMARC, a grassroots non-governmental organization was born 20 years ago with the mission of developing and advocating for community radio, particularly in the Global South which had the least access to mass media and which generally lacked legal frameworks for the establishment of community controlled media. AMARC’s work was first centered in Latin and Central America and subsequently in Africa

with both regions now having vital and growing community radio movements, and hundreds of AMARC members.

AMARC 8 was held in Kathmandu despite its remoteness from most of our members because we have found that holding a general assembly in a region serves as a sort of springboard for the development of community radio in the region. The visibility, which an international conference brings, results in press coverage and official notice which quickly translates into the possibility of creating legislation and freeing up frequencies for community use.

— from a report by Elizabeth Robinson





ing radio communication training and services to local, not-for-profit organizations. The goal is to facilitate the emergence of free, open and accountable media in countries, like Afghanistan, in transition to democracy. Martin, just 27 years old, is charged with launching the first women-run community radio stations in Afghanistan. The first two stations, in Kabul and Mazar-A-Sharif, went on the air in March.

The Freeplay Foundation, a South African-based NGO, displayed their innovative wind up and solar radios. Their new Lifeline Radio is the first radio ever produced solely for humanitarian use. The radios are currently committed to projects in Afghanistan, Liberia, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

Colin and Paulena Robbins of Grunthal, Manitoba, displayed their "radio-in-a-suitcase." Their company, Wantok Ent. Ltd.'s goal is to make it feasible for every organization in the world to own, operate and maintain their own community broadcast station regardless of their socio-economic conditions. The suitcase radios contain all the basic components needed for a simple low-powered FM station to go on the air. All that is needed to go on the air is a power source...and maybe a tall tree for the antenna.

American LPFM activist Pete Tridish of the Prometheus Radio Project led a series of workshops to teach the non-technically-inclined on how to build a simple low-powered FM station. By the end of the conference Kathmandu had an additional radio station on the air, pumping 40 watts from the roof the Yak & Yeti Hotel.

Namaste!

*Jim Ellinger is the marketing and PR guy for Houston MediaSource and has been active in community radio and television for more than 25 years. Contact him at [jime@houston-mediasource.org](mailto:jime@houston-mediasource.org) or 713.524.7700 x14.*

For more information on organizations mentioned in this article, visit their websites at:

[www.amarc@amarc.org](mailto:www.amarc@amarc.org)  
[www.freyplayfoundation.org](http://www.freyplayfoundation.org)  
[www.wings@wings.org](mailto:www.wings@wings.org)  
[www.bushradio.co.za](http://www.bushradio.co.za)  
[www.prometheusradio.org](http://www.prometheusradio.org)  
[www.houston-mediasource.org](mailto:www.houston-mediasource.org)  
[www.radiosagamatha.org](mailto:www.radiosagamatha.org)  
[www.wantokent.com](http://www.wantokent.com)  
[www.nefej.org.np](http://www.nefej.org.np)  
[www.impacs.org](http://www.impacs.org)

## New initiatives Designed to Include Underserved Populations in Australia

Though most Americans consider Australia to be "down under," as a country, it may be light years ahead in its embrace of diversity in community media. Aside from a flourishing network of over 200 community radio stations, there have been several initiatives designed to include underserved populations in Australia.



One such program is The Broadcasting for Remote Aboriginal Communities Scheme (BRACS), introduced by the Australian Federal government in 1987 in response to Aboriginal and Islander people were concerned about the impact of the satellite and requested resources that would allow them to:

- ▲ broadcast locally produced radio and video material
- ▲ receive mainstream radio and television programs
- ▲ control what was being broadcast into their communities.

The concept was to give Aboriginal and Islander people, access to and control of their own media at a community level. Due to limited funding, basic domestic audio and video equipment was installed in 80 communities across Australia.

The Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasting Association (TEABBA) was set up in 1989 specifically to work with and provide support for the 29 Top End BRACS (stations located in the Northern Territory) communities to promote broadcasting from studios at the community level. The network broadcasts in many languages and music styles, reflecting the diversity of its audience and coverage area.

Recently, the Outback Digital Network was initiated by the federal government to provide a wireless telecommunications infrastructure which soon could also greatly enhance the interconnectedness of the Aboriginal community media network.

For more information:

Broadcasting for Remote Aboriginal Communities  
<http://www.phm.gov.au/hsc/bracs>  
 National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters Council Inc., <http://www.nembc.org.au/emerging>  
 Community Broadcasting Association of Australia  
<http://www.cbba.org.au>





In São Paulo, over 30 activists occupied the office of Mr Everaldo Gomes Pereira, manager of ANATEL São Paulo's office, demanding an audience with him. In the meeting, Mr Everaldo was presented with a pineapple trophy for being the manager who closed the most radio stations in Brazil, and also received a manifesto against ANATEL's stance in defending large communication companies.

# Community Media in Brazil

## The Good News Is on the Web

BY JULIO WAINER

In 1994 the president of Brazil, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, signed a law that required every pay TV system to reserve six channels for public use: community, Senate, Congress, city chamber, universities, and city/state cultural and educational. Although the law was based upon the U.S. model, the Brazilian law did not anticipate operating income for these channels—in other words, the law was an “unfunded mandate.” The monies needed to operate these channels would have to be raised outside the federal budget by the individuals or organizations involved.

In 2001, the Brazilian Association of Community Channels (Associação Brasileira de Canais Comunitários), was formed and created a website, that has not been updated since then. (see <http://www.abccom.com.br>).

Today, these channels barely exist, and only under the most difficult conditions. Community radio stations, however, are more widespread, yet are under attack by the supposedly independent federal agency, ANATEL, the Brazilian National Telecommunications Agency ([www.anatel.gov.br](http://www.anatel.gov.br)). ANATEL is carrying out a systematic campaign of repression and criminalization against free and community radio stations throughout the country. According to Brazil's Independent Media Center (<http://brasil.inadymedia.org/en/blue/>), more community radios have been closed in the first three months of the Lula administration, than in any other prior 90-day period.

In response, a number of legislators are lodging their objections and even declared May 21 as a National Day for Community Radio Transmission. In addition, a series of organized sit-ins have taken place in a number of cities in Brazil,



In Goiânia, demonstrators made a lot of noise with rattles and horns and were treated with hostility by ANATEL management. Leaflets and a letter outlining the protestors' demands were shown to the agency.

designed to embarrass and draw attention to ANATEL's actions.

The best news about community media is on World Wide Web. Several organizations have created local centers for public use.

City, state, and federal government have specific programs for widespread use of the web, many of them based in public schools. The concept behind these projects is the Digital Inclusion/Exclusion program—a national vision for this can be found at [www.cdi.org.br/boletim/boletim012\\_site.htm](http://www.cdi.org.br/boletim/boletim012_site.htm).

Among the most important are the privately-held Committee for Democracy in Information Technology (CDI) (<http://www.cdi.org.br>), and Telecentros (<http://www.telecen->



tros.org.br) launched by the British organization Regency Foundation ([http://www.worldtelecenters.org/brasil\\_news.php](http://www.worldtelecenters.org/brasil_news.php)) and working with the United Nations.

Overall, Brazilian media is a strong economic sector, which nevertheless suffers the same problems their counterparts abroad are facing now—unemployment, a decrease in income, and still a strong dependence on international agencies' information. A good criticism of all of these issues can be found at [www.observatoriodaimprensa.com.br](http://www.observatoriodaimprensa.com.br). Another website with good access to community media/progressive communications can be reached at <http://www.rbc.org.br>

It is relevant to say that Brazilian Social Communication Council (Brazilian FCC) was installed in May 2002, 11 years after the original law mandating public channels. There is hopeful expectation that the main questions related to mass media can now be discussed in a democratic environment, where differences in views from corporate, state and public interests can appear.

*Julio Wainer has been a video producer for 20 years. He studied architecture and urbanism at the University of São Paulo, Brazil. Often scriptwriter and director for his films, he produces for NGOs, the public sector, universities and research centers. Julio Wainer is a Fulbright fellow. He owns Alter Cyber Media S/C LTDA and teaches in the journalism department of Catholic University in São Paulo. He serves on the boards of Vitae Civilis Instituto para o Meio Ambiente, o Desenvolvimento e a Paz.*



**In Porto Alegre, over 20 activists were prevented from entering the ANATEL building, which was completely closed. They made a lot of noise, and, after some time, succeeded in getting the manager to come down. He refused, however, to listen to the demonstrators, who left an inscription on the building's wall: "Community radio is not a crime."**

# The Open Channels' Website: The Global Village CAT

BY CHRISTER HEDERSTRÖM

In 1995, the Network Open Channels in Sweden launched its international website: The Global Village CAT (Community Access Television). It was created in order to rally support from local and national government for the new third way of broadcasting in Sweden, and we wanted everyone to know that there are not only private and government controlled television in the world. Everybody should know that there are many channels like this in Germany, the U.S., and several other countries. Mainly, this was part of a democratic process as well as a part of the democratic tradition of free speech.

It soon became obvious that this was a unique website getting worldwide attention. Within a short period of time, it was quite well-known among access advocates in Europe and across the U.S., with the Global Village CAT being reported as an important instrument in the struggle for legalizing public access television in France.

## Description

As with most access centers the Global Village CAT (<http://www.openchannel.se/cat>) is a nonprofit run by voluntary resources. The site is a part of the Open Channels Network (the National Association for Public Access), bringing public access to one million cable households in 10 cities in Sweden. The Global Village CAT today lists websites of 600 access television centers in 18 countries, 400 centers are in the U.S. and 77 in Germany. The website also provides comprehensive pages with information about access television in the U.S. and other countries, links to nonprofit media organizations and reference to documents about access television such as books, articles, lectures, reports, and television programs.

It is estimated that there are 2,000 access centers (with 4,000 channels) in the U.S., and sometime in a near future

most centers will probably have their own websites. It will be a challenge to get them all into the knowledge network in order to enhance the democratic process through the television media.

We are undergoing an access evolution made possible by websites, discussion groups, chat, and email. Governments, media, and national organizations will not be able to ignore this global movement which is initiated locally. Local governments are the primary support on an official level; however, support from international organizations will be important. For example, in 1995 the Parliament of the European Union advocated measures to support citizens' broadcasting and open channels.

## User Commentary

It has been satisfying to get positive feedback from access people around the world. Some examples in the email-box include the following:

Your site is wonderful and has proven very helpful to us as we try to get our station going in Boise. — Thanks for all your work on this. (Peter Lutze, chair, Treasure Valley Public Access Television, Boise, Idaho)

Loved the access links site! Must have taken years to gather all those links. Would you consider adding us? — Thanks for the great site! (Marlo Ellis, executive director of Community Media Network (120,000 subs reaching eleven cities in Michigan))

Thanks so much for the heads-up and the compliment—we are trying! Yes, we are the only U.S. station I've come across named "Open". Not unfitting for an unusual area of the country...Have a wonderful week. (Celeste Dake, Acadiana Open Channel, Lafayette, Louisiana)

Thanks for your website, it was interesting reading about the different stations

see GLOBAL VILLAGE CAT — page 25



# The Dictator's Worst Nightmare: The Internet

BY THOMAS A. DINE

for Community Media Review

Dictators have long known that one of the keys to maintaining power is controlling the press. That is why in 1789 the founders of the United States enshrined freedom of the press in the very first amendment in the Bill of Rights—they knew that there was no more important check against tyranny than a free press that could provide the citizens of the young republic with unfettered access to information.

Since 1789, things have only gotten worse for dictators. Where they were once confronted only with newspapers, they now face an entire arsenal of weapons of mass instruction: radio, television, and the Internet. At Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, we have dedicated ourselves to using these tools to make life miserable for dictators. And we have moved with the times and adapted to technological innovations, so that, where we once were limited to radio, the Internet has become a primary weapon in our war against today's tyrants. In this essay, I would like to illustrate the unique power of the Internet to subvert tyranny by looking at a specific case: the nation of Armenia.

Of the 15 republics that emerged as independent nations from the ashes of the Soviet Union, Armenia was considered one of the likeliest to succeed. It was a Christian country with close ties to the

*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty is a private, international communications service to Eastern and Southeastern Europe, Russia, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Southwest Asia, funded by the U.S. Congress through the Broadcasting Board of Governors. In countries stretching from Belarus to Bosnia and from the Arctic Sea to the Persian Gulf, listeners rely on RFE/RL's daily news, analysis, and current affairs programming to provide a coherent, objective account of events in their region and the world. (<http://rferl.org>)*

West, a highly educated populace, and a powerful, cohesive diaspora abroad. But, after two or three years of post-Soviet freedom and democracy, Armenia, like nearly all of the former Soviet republics, regressed into a corrupt, cronyist autocracy. Earlier this year, President Robert Kocharian was "reelected" in an election that all objective observers deemed bogus. Armenia's sad decline is reflected in the recent annual report published by Freedom House, which demoted Armenia from a ranking of "Partly Free" to "Not Free," the lowest ranking possible.

A central feature of Armenia's autocratic government, of course, is the absence of a free press. Until recently, Armenia had only one independent TV station. Two years ago the government shut it down. There is now no domestic source of news and information that is not closely tied to the ruling government. In such an environment, RFE/RL, whose

mission as a "surrogate" broadcaster is to provide news in the local languages of the countries to which we broadcast, plays a role that is literally indispensable. You can see this reflected in the extraordinarily high ratings garnered by our Armenian programming: approximately 22 percent of Armenians with radios are regular listeners.

But now, thanks to the information revolution, the corrupt rulers of Armenia have more than radio broadcasts to worry about: the Armenian Service of RFE/RL has a website ([www.armenialiberty.org](http://www.armenialiberty.org)), and it is giving the government fits. The site is bilingual (Armenian and English), and is updated every hour with the latest news. It contains many interactive features, such as reader polls, and offers audio streaming of RFE/RL broadcasts. And it has been a smashing success, receiving 1.5 million Armenia-based hits each month (this in a country whose population is only 3 million). Thanks to this



## Promoting Democratic Values and Institutions Abroad

*The mission of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty is to promote democratic values and institutions by disseminating factual information and ideas. From Central Europe to the Pacific, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, from Russia to Central Asia to the Persian Gulf, countries are struggling to overcome autocratic institutions, violations of human rights, centralized economies, ethnic and religious hostilities, regional conflicts, and controlled media.*

*Stability—based on democracy and free-market economies—throughout this region is essential to global peace.*

*Based on the conviction that the first requirement of democracy is a well informed citizenry, and building on nearly a half century of surrogate broadcasting to this region:*

- ▲ 1. RFE/RL provides objective news, analysis, and discussion of domestic and regional issues crucial to successful democratic and free-market transformations.
- ▲ 2. RFE/RL strengthens civil societies by projecting democratic values.
- ▲ 3. RFE/RL combats ethnic and religious intolerance and promotes mutual understanding among peoples.
- ▲ 4. RFE/RL provides a model for local media, assists in training to enhance media professionalism and independence, and develops partnerships with local media outlets.
- ▲ 5. RFE/RL fosters closer ties between the countries of the region and the world's established democracies.



website, more and more Armenians are circumventing the government's attempts to prevent them from knowing the truth about what is happening in their country.

An exquisite example of the site's power occurred just a few months ago, when Armenian state television announced that President Bush had sent Kocharian a letter congratulating him on his reelection. Well, that was partly true. Bush did send Kocharian a letter, but it didn't congratulate him—instead, it expressed the profound disappointment the United States felt at Armenia's failure to hold a free and fair election. So we did what we could to counter the misinformation being disseminated by the state-run media: we put the letter up on our website. And so, with a few simple clicks of the mouse, the dishonesty of the Kocharian government was displayed for millions of Armenians to see. (We know the people are reading the site, because government officials frequently call us to complain about stories that appear there.)

Our Armenian website, and all the websites run by our broadcast services, present authoritarian regimes with a dilemma. They can deny people access to computers and the Internet in order to deny them access to truthful news—but in so doing, they risk turning their countries into economic, technological, and cultural backwaters. Or they can throw up their hands and let people access sites like ours, hoping that their continued control of domestic media will be enough to maintain their rule. But they must know that, in the end, the Internet is an unstoppable force. And, as we see every day in Armenia, it is on the side of the people, not the dictators.

*Thomas A. Dine is president of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Inc. Prior to joining the RFE/RL in August 1997, Mr. Dine served as assistant administrator for Europe and the New Independent States at the U.S. Agency for International Development (1993-1997) and executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (1980-1993). Earlier, he served as a staffer in the U.S. Senate and the American Embassy in New Delhi, India, and as a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer in the Philippines.*

## Global Village CAT

*continued from page 23*

everywhere. Best wishes from Florida. (Ellen Kamp Capalungan, Tampa public access Channels 19 and 20)

I want to start my own public access show in New York City but I don't know how to start. Could you tell me how I could get a list of all the public access stations in my area. I live in Queens but I want my show to be aired in Manhattan, The Bronx and Brooklyn. — Any information you can give me would be greatly appreciated. Thank you. (Toni Correa)

Hello, I first wanted to say congratulations on such a wonderful website, it is very informative and also amazing to see what other stations are doing and how they are growing. Thank you (Nyesha Smith, Sr. Program Coordinator, Hartford Public Access Television, Inc.)

Will it be possible to add our organization to your listing of access operations? If so, we would greatly appreciate your effort. Thank you. (Tim Lantz, vice-president/station manager, Prescott Community Access Channel, Inc. Prescott, Arizona).

I have viewed your site with interest. According to your list, there is only one PA-TV in Tennessee, in Germantown (west TN near Memphis). Do you know if there are plans to bring PA-TV to Nashville (the state's capital) or other cities in Tennessee? Any information you can provide would be appreciated. Thanks, (Susan McKay)

Hi Christer—I am desperately looking for access TV in the Huntsville, Alabama area. How or who or what do I contact to try to find some access TV in this area. Thank you for your web page. Thank you, (Terri Fulton)

Please add Ste. Genevieve Public Television to your fine list of public access television sites. We are located in a small community about an hour's drive south of St. Louis in Missouri, on the banks of the Mississippi River. (Don Prichard)

I am researching material on access television for a book I am writing and I found your excellent website—thanks. (Helen Martin, New Zealand Broadcasting School)

### Concluding Comments

Access channels will only expand thanks to public involvement and open support in the political community, and should not anticipate any support through private or state-controlled media. Media channels run by the citizens themselves are not a cup of tea for media moguls like Berlusconi in Italy, the global Murdoch, or the ever-growing mighty Mouse. The access movement must find its own ways of communicating with the public and their political institutions.

A recent example is the new grass-roots television movement in Italy—street television. A public protest against the Italian prime minister's undemocratic control of both commercial and state-run television.

The struggle for freedom of expression is a special challenge in so-called "open societies" as in countries where democracy still is taken for granted, such as in Sweden or the United States or even Italy. But, with the increasingly unregulated concentration of media ownerships, more citizens will engage in grass-roots communications. Access radio and television broadcast through traditional channels like FM radio and cable channels will not be replaced by Internet channels but will instead be enhanced by it. Access media, it is predicted, will be more powerful than ever before thanks to Internet and the knowledge network. Watch the channels and welcome to <http://www.openchannel.se/cat>

*Christer Hederström resides in Stockholm, Sweden. He was chairman of the public access television station Open Channel and currently serves on the boards of the National Association for Public Access Television in Sweden; Stockholm Community Radio FM 88 and 93.5; and the Radio Academy of Sweden. He is the owner of the nonprofit media relations company Ideosphere and has been a media consultant to government and ministers of parliament. He was a member of the Editorial Committee for Internet at the National Commission on Democracy from 1998-2000. Email [christer.hederstrom@chello.se](mailto:christer.hederstrom@chello.se).*



# Search for Common Ground: 'Countering the CNN Effect'

BY JEFF HANSELL

Since 1982, Search for Common Ground has been working in the area of international conflict-resolution on the principle of transforming the way the world deals with conflict, by "understanding the differences and acting on the commonalities."

Recently John Marks, the founder of SFCG writing in the introduction to *The Power of the Media*, a handbook for Peacebuilders said, "Wherever and whenever violent conflict looms, television, radio, newspapers and websites have a crucial role to play. They can inflame the situation; or they can use their considerable power to defuse tension. In other words, they can be part of the problem; or they can be part of the solution..."

In part, because of the so-called 'CNN effect' of war images on televi-

sion audiences around the world, SFCG argues for a more ethical use of the media in order to counterbalance the negative effects and reverse the damage that has already been done.

Today, Search for Common Ground can be said to be utilizing community media as a tool for social transformation within outcomes-based projects in a number of countries around the world. One such television project is in Macedonia.

*Nashe Maalo* ("Our Neighborhood") is the first children's television program made to promote intercultural understanding, to encourage conflict prevention in a multicultural society, and to impart specific conflict-resolution skills that children can use in their everyday lives. This unique series, co-produced by Common Ground Productions (CGP) and Search for Common Ground in Macedonia (SCGM), presents a timely opportunity to influence an entire generation of children in Macedonia in the direction of mutual tolerance and



*The fact that ethnic Albanian, Macedonian, Roma, and Turkish youth showed more positive perceptions of each other after viewing only eight episodes underscores the value of the series and the need for sustaining the broadcast of the program.*

respect.

Executive producer Eran Fraenkel feels that with *Nashe Maalo*, he is actually teaching both adults and children how to use the media in their own country as

a tool for social transformation.

"However, we felt that television programs

by themselves were too passive and not enough to make a sustainable change" Fraenkel said. *Nashe Maalo* uses lots of interactivity (similar to methods employed in *Sesame Street*) to get the children involved and invested in the program. Fraenkel also does school and community outreach, to more directly involve all segments of the population.

## **The Show—*Nashe Maalo***

The show stars Karmen, an animated building with a voice, whose mission is to harbor peace within her dilapidated walls. She has been trying to talk to the grown-ups for years, but they have never listened. In their children, though, she sees a great capacity for learning, understanding, generosity, and kindness.

Karmen selects eight children from Macedonian, Roma, Turkish, and Albanian backgrounds, and creates an opportunity for them to meet. The children become friends and together discover the secrets of the building. By leading them on journeys through magical doorways, she provides them with the

opportunity to see and learn about the world from each other's perspectives. Through this, the kids develop a deeper sense of mutual understanding and respect for one another.

A trademark of Common Ground Productions, one that separates it from other production organizations, but makes it similar to community media, is to work with local professionals who represent the ethnic groups for whom the production is intended and to rely on a minimal expatriate presence on site. The *Nashe Maalo* Production Team consists of approximately 100 professionals and support staff who come from the country's Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish and Roma communities. The child actors that star in the series are likewise from these four groups. The resident producer is the only expatriate directly involved at the production site in Skopje, while CGP and SCGM provide on-going executive and technical guidance.

## **Local Employment**

One of the underlying tensions in Macedonia is the weak economy and resulting lack of economic opportunities. Meanwhile, the making of *Nashe Maalo* provided jobs for over 100 local professionals and support staff and a steady flow of business for local vendors supplying materials, equipment and rental space for the production.

## **Capacity Building**

*Nashe Maalo* offers ongoing training





opportunities for the Nashe Maalo Production Team. CGP continues to build the capacity of the team by providing overall executive guidance that includes rigorous reviewing of scripts and productions. A highly skilled resident producer is also on hand to provide guidance at the set and in post-production. One of the primary means of building capacity is to have the local professionals take on primary responsibility for the writing and production of *Nashe Maalo*, along with the day-to-day management of operations: timelines, budgets, accounts, equipment, sets, etc. The Nashe Maalo Production Team is, in essence, learning the details of producing a professional television series from start to completion.

The production team is also receiving training from Common Ground Productions and Sesame Workshop in skills they can continue to use after the series is completed. For example, the editing unit, which was created during the course of production, is likely to continue after the series' completion as a viable self-sustaining operation.

So has *Nashe Maalo* worked? According to Fraenkel, "It has been wildly successful beyond all our initial expectations." According to research and surveys, more than 75 percent of Macedonian children across all ethnic groups watch and participate in the series. In addition, more than 50 percent of parents also watch the show with their children.

*Nashe Maalo* was found to have a very positive impact on children's views of themselves and others. When asked to describe members of the Albanian, Macedonian, Roma, and Turkish ethnic groups before viewing, many children demonstrated negative, stereotyped perceptions. After viewing, many children provided more positive descriptions when presented with images of people from other ethnic groups or their own.

Macedonian children showed the greatest positive changes in perceptions of other ethnic groups. This evolution of attitudes among the dominant ethnic group is one of the most powerful findings of our research. Furthermore, Albanian children showed the greatest positive changes in perceptions of their own ethnic group.

The fact that ethnic Albanian, Macedonian, Roma, and Turkish youth showed more positive perceptions of each other after viewing only eight episodes underscores the value of the series and the need for sustaining the broadcast of the program. If there is hope for building mutual respect and understanding among different groups of people living in Macedonia, it lies with the country's young citizens. Efforts such as *Nashe Maalo* are a positive step toward a better, more peaceful future.

*Jeff Hansell is the guest editor for this issue of the CMR. He is chair of the Northeast Region of the Alliance for Community Media and executive director of Malden Access TV north of Boston. Email [jeff@matv.org](mailto:jeff@matv.org)*

*—This report was compiled and assembled from interviews with Eran Fraenkel and Susan Koscis, and from major parts of the SFCG website (<http://www.sfcg.org>) and other publications.*

*Eran Fraenkel is the Director of Southeast Europe Programs for the European Centre for Common Ground, Brussels.*

*"It has been wildly successful beyond all our initial expectations."*

*— Eran Fraenkel*



## CALL FOR ENTRIES

The 2003 Common Ground Student Short Film Competition is now open to entries through the end of July. This annual student film competition is open to all film students in the U.S. and abroad. The films that are selected will be included in the Common Ground Film Festival in Washington, DC, and in the traveling Common Ground University Film Series.

### Criteria for Selection:

The films selected to be screened at the Common Ground Film Festival in Washington in fall 2003 will:

- ▲ Be balanced in their portrayal of all sides of the conflict or issue;
- ▲ Communicate shared human experiences and qualities;
- ▲ Avoid stereotyping by focusing on individuals rather than representatives of a group;
- ▲ Promote understanding of the issues and of the people involved;
- ▲ Provide audiences with a broader context of the issues;
- ▲ Be relevant to the important issues that people, communities, and countries face today.

*Film submission deadline: July 31, 2003*

For more information go to: <http://www.sfcg.org> or contact Susan Koscis, vice president of Arts and Culture, at 202.265.4300 or [skoscis@sfcg.org](mailto:skoscis@sfcg.org)



# Produce Locally, Distribute Globally

## New Strategies to Make the Local Voices of our Global Village Heard

BY MIKE EISENMENGER

Beginning the late 1980s, Deep Dish Satellite TV created and refined an innovative model for compiling community-produced media into thematic and timely programming with a national scope. One approach could have been to send a crew around the country collecting interviews, the same costly and time consuming approach used by commercial broadcasters. But instead, Deep Dish sought out local producers, far more capable of telling the stories of their own communities and asked them to produce edited segments and shows for a coordinating producer chosen by Deep Dish. This approach resulted in some astonishing programs that probed a myriad of issues (farm crisis, labor, healthcare) with a depth and sensitivity seldom found on commercial news networks.

The series was then satellitecast enabling public access centers to freely downlink and program the shows, thus redistributing the content back to its original sources. This method of decentralizing the initial production also led to the success of the *Gulf Crisis Series* (produced by Paper Tiger TV/Deep Dish) which collected hundreds of tapes from across the country in the months leading up to the first Gulf War and redistributed the content as an edited series of programs prior to the launch of the war.

In December 1999, the Independent Media Center (IMC) was launched in Seattle, Washington specifically to provide coverage of the World Trade Organization protests. Over 300 volunteer media activists converged to make it possible, and the week-long multifaceted coverage included a daily newspaper, a website with up to the minute articles, pictures, video and audio; and a daily TV program satellitecast across the country to public access centers and schools.

The production of daily satellitecast (*Showdown in Seattle*) was a first for media activists. It was made possible by a collaborative effort between Seattle IMC coordinators and several media collec-



tives, some seasoned access producers (Changing America, Paper Tiger TV, Whispered Media) and other experienced movement producers (Big Noise Films, HAVC, Sleeping Giant, VideoActive). These teams brought the skills and tools necessary to edit the programs, while pool footage was culled from both the teams and 60 videographers working in the field. As tapes came into the IMC center, they were dubbed to Betacam and logged in preparation for all night edit sessions.

This intake process was enormous, accumulating over 400 hours of footage during the course of the week. Finished programs were literally bicycled to the uplink site every morning and satellitecast on time reserved by Deep Dish TV. Over the course of the week, five 30-minute programs were produced and uplinked. The video archive later played a pivotal role in legal and civil rights proceedings.

The strength of the Seattle IMC model was to create a site-specific space timed

to an event where decentralized production could take place collaboratively. It successfully meshed media activism with the work of social movements, blending technical and social organizing practices into participatory media production.

By April 2000, this model was repeated successfully in Washington DC for the IMF/World Bank meetings, then in Prague, Quebec, Genoa, Buenos Aires, Chiapas, etc. Today, there are more than 120 local independent media centers in 20 countries.

Even as I write this, a corner of my computer screen displays a live video stream from Geneva, Switzerland where the IMC has been covering the meeting of the G8 Summit.

As the IMC concept has gone global, it has developed innovative solutions for decentralizing production and distribution. One of the stumbling blocks of broadcast video has been to find an inexpensive solution for distributing programming on the Internet other than with streamed media. While streaming media offers the immediacy of live feeds, it is ephemeral by nature and does not provide the quality necessary for rebroadcast usage or for community screenings. One evolving solution for sharing and distributing broadcast quality footage has been to use digital

video compression tools to reduce video file sizes so that programming can be sent over the Internet using simple

ftp client software (ftp is file transfer protocol used for transferring large files). Users who download the compressed video files can then decode the files back to the original DV format for importing into their non-linear editing software. While there are an abundance of video compression tools available, the IMC has been using the VP3 codec, which is freely available as open source software and provides for smaller file sizes while maintaining acceptable broadcast quality. The beauty of this technique is that anyone using non-linear editing tools with high-

<http://deepdish.igc.org>  
<http://www.papertiger.org>



Speed Internet access already has everything needed to begin distributing video in this manner.

This past February 15, the New York City OIMC did a trial run focusing on VP3 as a video filesharing standard during the global peace demonstrations. The NYC-IMC set up a ftp server and invited IMCs from around the world to upload their own video coverage of events so all users could share, screen, and broadcast each other's coverage locally. This allows local producers to choose what is most appropriate for use in their own communities. The small amount of time it takes to encode and decode these video files far outweighs the cost and time of shipping multiple tapes to all parts of the world. More significantly, it also brings us closer to realizing a near real-time global video network with little or no infrastructure cost.

European IMCs are now coordinating a peer-to-peer file-sharing scheme based on the VP3 codec for the demonstrations in Geneva and Evian during the G8 meeting in June 2003. Since this is a peer-to-peer network, (in progress as of this writing), the increased bandwidth allows for many simultaneous uploads and downloads.

While the Independent Media Center is geared toward covering social justice issues internationally, the techniques are accessible to all community media producers. One can easily imagine public access producers extending their own unique social networks into shared video networks to expand the reach and depth of their programming. At a time when the Federal Communications Commission is enacting rule changes that will result in even greater consolidation of mass media, these new strategies may be the only way that the local voices of our global village will be heard.

Additional information and technical guides for using VP3 can be found on the MNN web site at <http://mnn.org/cm/cmr>

Michael Eisenmenger is senior community media specialist at Manhattan Neighborhood Network, New York City. Contact him at [michael@mnn.org](mailto:michael@mnn.org)

# Bucking the Trends

## Fostering Local Television in the Age of Globalization

BY ROBERT HUESCA

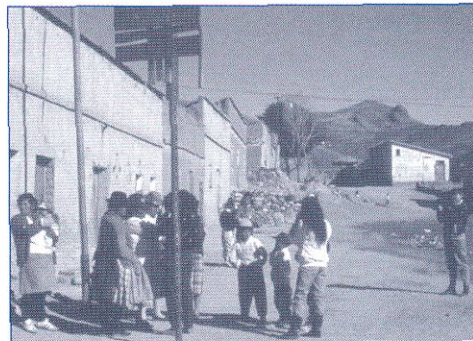
While the trend in broadcasting worldwide has been toward the concentration of ownership by corporate media giants, a movement across Latin America has resisted global privatization efforts by constructing low-powered, low-budget, citizen-run television stations. Scattered reports of these grassroots efforts document the growth of low-powered television stations from Guatemala and Honduras to Brazil and Bolivia. They offer hope, inspiration, and concrete steps that local communities can take to invigorate citizen broadcast initiatives.

### Global Trends

Political and economic changes in Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s have mirrored those experienced in other parts of the third world and in Eastern Europe. The fall of the Berlin Wall coincided with the decline of authoritarian governments, the rise of U.S.-styled electoral politics, and the "rationalization" of national economies. Runaway corporate capitalism appears to be the global norm, bringing with it high-priced political campaigns, frozen wages, eliminated subsidies on basic goods, unlimited foreign access to resources, and cut-rates on state industries put up for sale. Uruguayan novelist Eduardo Galeano has captured the essence of contemporary policies as "the privatization of wealth and the subsidization of debt."

These contemporary policies seem unlikely to foster nonprofit movements to democratize the media. Yet the political hostility toward the state and the embrace of the marketplace have generated unanticipated and unintended consequences for mass media in Latin America.

The rhetoric of "democracy" coupled with political and economic deregulation converted much of Latin America into a supermarket of the industrialized world.



Two reporters from Bolivian tin miner's union radio station, Radio Nacional de Huanuni, conduct a live broadcast for radio with women discussing neighborhood problems. One reporter is using a camcorder for later transmission on the community's television station.



Two announcers from Bolivian tin miner's union radio station, Radio Nacional de Huanuni, conduct the morning news program.



An announcer takes a break outside of the Bolivian tin miner's union radio station, Radio Nacional de Huanuni, which transmits a short-wave broadcast.



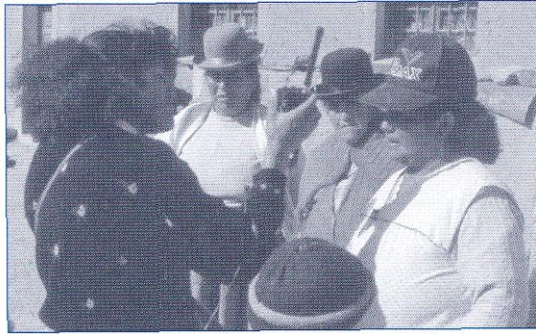
Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and civic groups, which have a tradition of grassroots support in Latin America, have entered this newly opened supermarket to purchase cheap, consumer electronics, which can be used to produce and transmit television programs inexpensively. In the case of Bolivia, the state has not closed down these low-powered stations (whose legality is unclear), perhaps because of policy confusions created by the frenzied deregulation in the 1980s.

### The Unlikely Case of Bolivia

I traveled to Bolivia in 1993 and 1994 to conduct dissertation research of the well-known community radio stations of the tin miners' unions. The mood of the tin miners was pessimistic and somber given the worldwide collapse of the tin market, the depletion of natural resources, and the privatization of the state mining industry. While these factors have resulted in the loss of jobs and the consequent demise of miners' radio stations, they have been accompanied by the creation of a virtual network of television stations in mining and other rural areas.

The creation of community television stations in Bolivia is surprising. First, Bolivia is the poorest country in Latin America after Haiti, with most people—especially those in rural areas—unable to earn enough money to meet everyday living expenses. Second, Bolivia has been among the most repressive political states, particularly in regard to television broadcasting. Television did not reach Bolivia until 1969, and even then only government and a few university stations were allowed to broadcast. That all changed with broadcast regulation reforms in the mid-1980s, which set off the fastest growth trend in the purchase of both receivers and transmitters in all of Latin America.

To be sure, some of the increase in broadcasting has been driven by existing corporations in search of lucrative new



**A reporter from Bolivian tin miner's union radio station, Radio Nacional de Huanuni, conducts live interviews with women who discuss neighborhood issues and problems.**

markets. Nevertheless most, if not all, rural stations have been opened by labor unions, utility cooperatives, and municipal governments that have put a surcharge on electrical bills or worker's dues

to pay for staff and equipment. A typical station is housed in a small adobe structure outfitted with consumer-grade components: a satellite dish, a few VHS decks, a camcorder, monitors, and transmitter capable of powering 5 to 50 watts. Depending on the budget of the station, personnel ranged from a single equipment operator to operators and a small team of program producers, usually made up of local youth.

The tradition of grassroots organizing in Bolivia has been benefi-

cial to the community television movement. Labor unions and rural, electrical cooperatives have provided ready-made funding vehicles for the stations. In addition, these organizations are characterized by their participatory traditions of self-governance, which have carried over into the administration of the television stations. The management of the stations were overseen typically by a board of directors comprised of elected officials or by special delegates chosen by union, cooperative, and community members.

These democratic structures have had a significant impact on the programming of the stations. Although the overwhelming amount of programming is of foreign origin (upward of 90 percent), the stations

have been used for local organizing, debate, and discussion. The miners' unions, for example, regularly tape record declarations, speeches, and activities from distant demonstrations and negotiations for later broadcast to rank-and-file and community members in their home towns. They claim that such uses of television have helped build solidarity and coordinate social movements.

Likewise, municipalities invite activists and political candidates

into the community stations to discuss public affairs, and they send cameras into the streets to document festivals and civic projects. Station directors suggested that such programming has strengthened cultural and political autonomy of their towns.

Indeed, nearly every station manager, program producer, and board director I spoke with felt that local television contributed positively to civic life, although they expressed fears of decaying morals and lost traditions due to the influx of such massive amounts of foreign programming. Despite these legitimate concerns, nearly all station personnel I spoke with saw the benefits of community television outweighing potential harms.

The Bolivian experience with local television functions as an inspirational example in times of despair over the consolidation of communication resources into fewer and greedier hands. Their ability to carve out strong community communication niches in a history of authoritarian control and economic hardship is a testimony to the creative capacity of ordinary people. Our own context of deregulation and consolidation is filled with promising rhetoric of expanded choices and freedom of expression. Community communicators must seize upon such rhetoric and wedge it between the system's contradictions to ensure that the public access tradition has a vibrant, promising future.

*Robert Huesca is an associate professor in the Department of Communication at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. Email Rhuesca@trinity.edu. His research interests are in communication and social change, community media, and international communication.*



## Loud and Clear from Barranquilla, Colombia

# Our Media, Not Theirs!

BY CLEMENCIA RODRIGUEZ

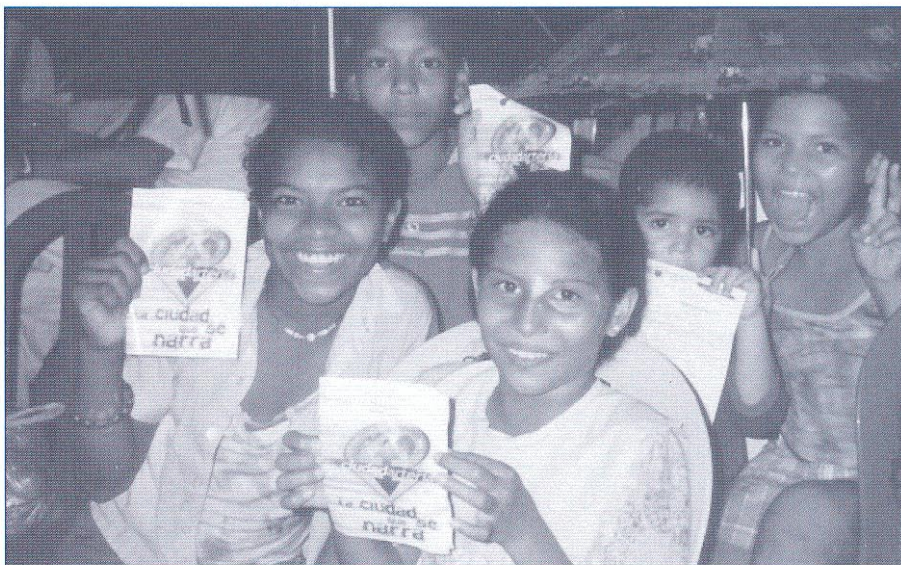
This past May, Barranquilla, a large Caribbean city on the Atlantic coast of Colombia welcomed 70 academics, activists, and foundation officers with a common interest in media justice and citizens' media. The event—OURMedia III—was the result of a collaboration between OURMedia ([www.ourmedianet.org](http://www.ourmedianet.org)) and the Universidad del Norte ([www.uninorte.edu.co](http://www.uninorte.edu.co)).

We came to Barranquilla from Korea, Japan, South Africa, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Denmark, Canada, and the U.S. Some of us traveled for days, missed planes, lost our luggage, but finally arrived in one piece, and with all the *ganas* in the world to engage in three days (and their nights) of intense dialogue, discussion, networking, and of course, getting to know that “other” Colombia kept in the shadows by mainstream mass media.

A thousand one stories could be told about OURMedia III in Barranquilla.

I could tell you about my feelings of awe during our visits to local communication for social change projects, such as the Colegio del Cuerpo: a dance collective formed by inner city kids (and their teachers). Here were kids who normally would have joined the guerilla or the right-wing militias, but instead opted for creating their own little world, where anger and pain become beautiful choreographies, and not bullets on the bodies of others.

I could talk of the strange experience of viewing a video documentary produced by students all about the street vendor near their school, and how we all stormed out of the viewing room to buy the señora's juicy empanadas and mango juice.



Kids watching themselves on video at the CiudadArteria project, downtown Barranquilla, Colombia, May 19, 2003.

What of the *Ciudad Arteria* project, where young Barranquilleros produce documentaries about everyday life in busy intersections of their city and then project them on a large screen on the



Information Summit panel, OURMedia III, Barranquilla, Colombia, 2003

intersection itself? The night was hot and wet, and as we were invited to share the bystanders' umbrellas, we shared the experience of the neighbors watching themselves and their daily routines on the big screen.

The conference itself consisted of several panels designed to meet needs we have been worrying about for years. A panel on evaluation dealt with the

urgency of designing appropriate methodologies to evaluate community media projects; Jo Tacchi told us about ethnographic methods; Patricia Tellez, Ole Prehn, Victor Van Oeyen, and Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron told us about specific evaluation studies of community radio and television in different parts of the world. A different panel dealt with regulatory frameworks, what has worked, what has not; Lumko Mtinde told us how South African media regulators are trying to balance access to frequencies for what they call the three tiers: public media, commercial media, and community media.

One of our main panels was devoted entirely to the World Summit of the Information Society to be convened by the United Nations in December of 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland. (See article on page 35.)

I believe there was consensus in the room of the Summit being more an excuse than an end in itself; given what we know about other UN summits, and having experienced the exclusionary practices with which the Information Summit is being organized, we do not expect much from the WSIS itself; on the other hand, the Summit is being used by



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Cablecast Scheduling

Channel	Start	Length	Proj ID	Project Title	Prog ID	Episode	Program Title	Status
62	Sat 05/20/00	20:00	02724	1880	0	0	Antonia's People	0
62	Sat 05/20/00	20:24	02724	1189	0	0	Antonia's People	0
62	Sat 05/20/00	20:24	02724	1189	0	0	Antonia's People	0
62	Sat 05/20/00	20:24	02724	1189	0	0	Antonia's People	0
62	Sat 05/20/00	20:24	02724	1189	0	0	Antonia's People	0

Appointment Book

Date/Time	Appointment	Status
5/20 8:00 a	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 8:30 a	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 9:00 a	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 9:30 a	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 10:00 a	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 10:30 a	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 11:00 a	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 11:30 a	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 12:00 p	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 12:30 p	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 1:00 p	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 1:30 p	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 2:00 p	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 2:30 p	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 3:00 p	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 3:30 p	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 4:00 p	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 4:30 p	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 5:00 p	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 5:30 p	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 6:00 p	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 6:30 p	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 7:00 p	Burton, Dan	1
5/20 7:30 p	Burton, Dan	1

Visit our website at [access.tucson.org/facil](http://access.tucson.org/facil) and take the Facil on-line tour.





**OURMedia exhibit at "Becoming the Media Workshop"**

media justice collectives, NGOs, activists in each country to involve the entire civil society in national social movements around the right to communicate, the need for open-source software, and need for low-cost access to information technologies.

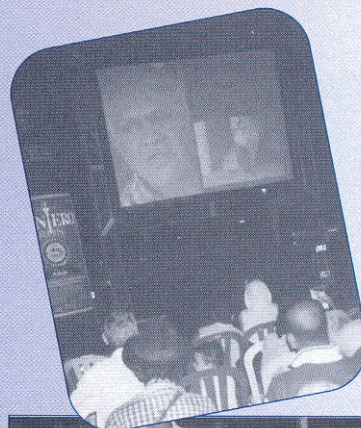
In other words, we need the environmentalists, the feminists, the minority movements, the gays, lesbians, and transgendered, the peace activists, the anti-globalization activists, and the human rights activists to appropriate the demands for media justice as their own. All in all, we heard approximately 50 presentations in three days, all covering different topics related to citizens' communication. We also had a poster session with presentations on different community media projects such as the Chiapas Media Project, which provides video technologies and training to Indigenous and campesino communities in Southern Mexico. Another was Radio Chiriquitebe, a community radio station trying to function as a tool for peace in one of the most violent areas in Colombia. (Soon all these papers and presentations will be available at our website at [www.ourmedianet.org](http://www.ourmedianet.org)).

Some of us who have attended past OURMedia meetings were pleased with the number of activists at OURMedia III engaged in real dialogue with the academics. In words of Dee Dee Halleck: "The 'indymedia' folk had a great get-together and it was amazing to see the young Independent Media Centers' activists from at least five countries listening to the academics who are actually taking their work seriously enough to even have footnotes and appendices on them!" Another highlight of the event was the strong presence of very young

academics and activists; it was refreshing to have three and four different generations in the same room at all times, the younger ones being in their mid-twenties.

Founded in 2000, OURMedia/ NUESTROSMedios is an emerging global network with the goal of facilitating a long-term dialogue between academics, activists, practitioners and policy experts around media justice and citizens' media initiatives. OURMedia is founded on the principles that, first, all communities and collectives need to communicate, express themselves, inform and be informed, dialogue with others, and to network; and second, that every community and collective has the right to the appropriate communication and information technologies and know-how to meet its historical communication and information needs. OURMedia provides a space for collaboration in which needs and alternatives can be identified in the areas of communication and information infrastructure, policy, and research. Ultimately, the goal of OURMedia is to design and develop initiatives that can strengthen citizens' media, community media, and alternative media in national and international policy arenas. One of our main objectives in the middle term is to help establish citizens' media as a strong voice in the floors of the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS) and The World Social Forum (WSF), among other international forums. Currently OURMedia includes 150 academics, activists, and students working in twenty countries.

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## **A Street Festival in Barranquilla, Colombia**

**BARRANQUILLA, COLOMBIA—Paseo Bolivar, May 19, 2003.** "CiudadArteria" ("City Artery") is a street festival, with music and entertainment to gather the crowd to view the video documentary about the street and the neighborhood. The location of the festival and screening changes from neighborhood to neighborhood as a new documentary is completed. This is the type of community organizing event that is common to community-based media around the world...a few North Americans remarked how it reminded them of early projects in video and media in the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s.

Basically, this event in Colombia is a reflection of the roots of access...



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# Summit to Address Global Information Society

The World Summit on the Information Society will be held in two phases. The first phase of WSIS will take place in Geneva hosted by the Government of Switzerland from 10 to 12 December 2003. The second phase will take place in Tunis hosted by the Government of Tunisia, from 16 to 18 November 2005.

## The Challenge

The global information society is evolving at breakneck speed. The accelerating convergence between telecommunications, broadcasting multimedia and information and communication technologies (ICTs) is driving new products and services, as well as ways of conducting business and commerce. At the same time, commercial, social and professional opportunities are exploding as new markets open to competition and foreign investment and participation. The modern world is undergoing a fundamental transformation as the industrial society that marked the 20th century rapidly gives way to the information society of the 21st century. This dynamic process promises a fundamental change in all aspects of our lives, including knowledge dissemination, social interaction, economic and business practices, political engagement, media, education, health, leisure and entertainment. We are indeed in the midst of a revolution, perhaps the greatest that humanity has ever experienced. To benefit the world community, the successful and continued growth of this new dynamic requires global discussion.

## The Opportunity

The World Summit on the Information Society will provide a unique opportunity for all key stakeholders to assemble at a high-level gathering and to develop a better understanding of this revolution and its impact on the international community. It aims to bring together Heads of State, Executive Heads of United Nations agencies, industry leaders, non-governmental organizations, media representatives and civil society in a single high-level event. The roles of the various partners (Member States, UN specialized agencies, private sector and civil society) in ensuring smooth coordination of the practical establishment of the information society around the globe will also be at the heart of the Summit and its preparation.

## Outcome

The anticipated outcome of the Summit is to develop and foster a clear statement of political will and a concrete plan of action for achieving the goals of the Information Society, while fully reflecting all the different interests at stake. The scope and nature of this ambitious project will require partnerships with public and private entities, and such partnerships will be actively sought in the coming months.



world summit  
on the information society  
Geneva 2003 - Tunis 2005  
<http://www.itu.int/wsisis>

## Who will Participate?

**Governments.** All governments have a stake in the Information Society, whatever their level of national income or their infrastructure facilities.

Governments are key for bringing the benefits of the Information Society to everyone through the development of national and global policies and frameworks to meet the challenges of the Information Society. In their pursuit of the public interest, governments can raise awareness, facilitate access to information for the public, and they also can lay the foundations for all citizens to benefit from Information and Communication Technologies in terms of improved quality of life, social services and economic growth.

**Private Sector.** The private sector will play an active role, in conjunction with governments and civil society, by offering an economically viable model to achieve the development objectives on the world agenda. The contribution of the private sector is instrumental in creating the material conditions for universal access to information and value-added ICT services. Its involvement in the Summit will promote economic growth and new partnerships, technology transfer, increase awareness of new technologies, and motivate the creation of local content development.

## Why is the role of ICT and mass media so important to the creation of an Information Society?

ICT and mass media can and will provide a powerful tool to leapfrog the existing development divide and accelerate efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals of combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environment degradation and gender inequality. Without the widespread and innovative use of ICTs, the MDGs may prove impossible to attain. ICT and mass media can also provide a global economic stimulus in a time of technology downturn where the appropriate measures and incentives are applied. The digital divide is one of the greatest non-tariff barriers to world trade among developed and developing countries alike. ICT and mass media will serve development goals, provided that access to information and communication is universal, and affordable, and freedom of expression is protected as a fundamental right. It also requires a policy framework is in place that is transparent, predictable and encourages competition.

and skilled employment opportunities.

The private sector input to the Summit is being facilitated by the Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors (CCBI), chaired by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC).

**Civil Society.** Civil society is playing an active role in identifying the social and cultural consequences of current trends and in drawing attention to the need to introduce democratic accountability on the strategic options taken at all levels. Its diversity and, often, hands-on approach to issues, make civil society a key player in the renewed international partnership called for by the UN Secretary-General.

**United Nations Family.** The Summit offers a unique opportunity for the global community to reflect, discuss and give shape to our common destiny in an era when countries and peoples are interconnected as never before. The UN family of organizations serves as a catalyst for change by bringing together state governments, as well as the private sector, international institutions and civil society in pursuit of common goals. The United Nations system and its specialized agencies will be deeply involved in the organization and holding of the Summit, with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) taking a lead role.



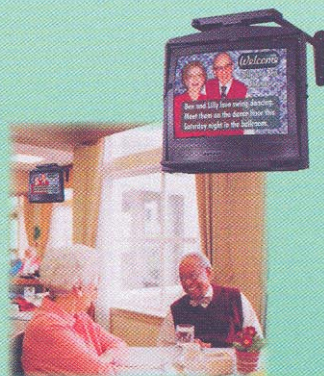
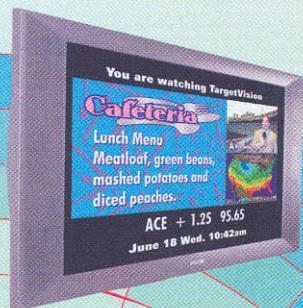
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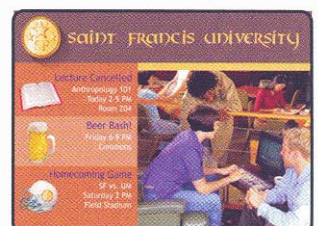
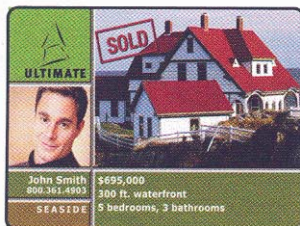
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